

REMARKS

Claims 1-3, 5-15 and 17-19 have been examined. Claims 4 and 16 were canceled by previous amendment. With this Amendment, Applicants cancel claims 1 and 14 without prejudice or disclaimer. After entry of this Amendment, claims 2, 3, 5-13, 15 and 17-19 will be pending in the application.

Response to Claim Rejections

Claims 1-3, 5, 14 and 15 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,097,926 to Takagi et al. ("Takagi") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,138,390 to Miyabayashi et al. ("Miyabayashi") and U.S. Patent No. 6,795,661 to Kanesawa et al. ("Kanesawa").

Claims 1, 3 and 11-15 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Pat. Pub. No. 2002/0190060 to Imai et al. ("Imai") in view of Miyabayashi and Kanesawa.

Claims 8 and 17 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Imai, Miyabayashi and Kanesawa, and in further view of U.S. Pat. Pub. No. 2001/0021491 to Chen et al. ("Chen").

Claims 7, 9 and 10 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Imai, Miyabayashi and Kanesawa, and in further view of U.S. Patent No. 6,094,559 to Otsuka et al. ("Otsuka").

Applicants have canceled claims 1 and 14 without prejudice or disclaimer. The remaining rejections are moot in view of the following claim amendments.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants have rewritten claims 6 and 18 in independent form, including the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims, as suggested by the Examiner. Therefore, claims 6 and 18 are patentable over the prior art as indicated by the Examiner. Applicants have also amended claims 2, 3, 5, 7-13, 15, 17 and 19 to depend from one of claims 6 and 18. Therefore, these claims are patentable at least by virtue of their dependencies.

Entry and consideration of this Amendment after final rejection are proper as the claim amendments combine features of examined claims, therefore additional search by the Examiner is not required.

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.116
U.S. Appin. No. 10/696,361

Atty. Docket No. Q78213

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Francis G. Plati, Sr.', written over a horizontal line.

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